MY DOG FRIENDS

JOHN BURROUGHS

EDITED BY CLARA BARRUS

Friendly sketches of dogs the great naturalist owned during his long life, together with studies of dog nature.

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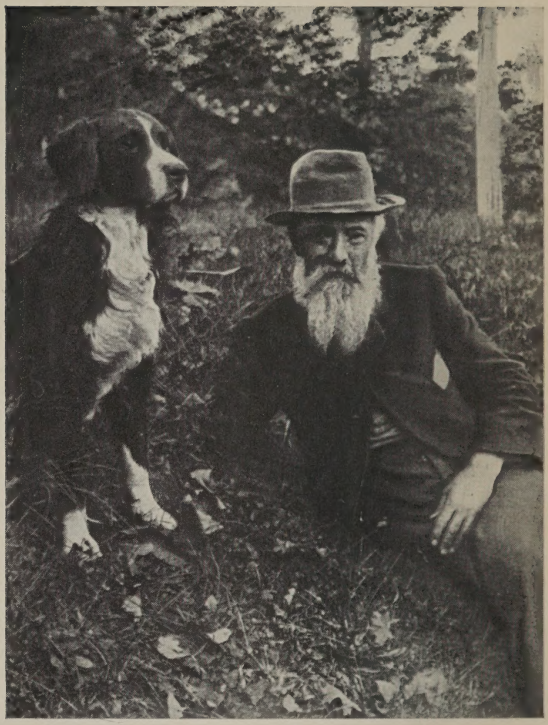

JOHN BURROUGHS AND 'I-KNOW'

MY DOG FRIENDS

BY

JOHN BURROUGHS

EDITED BY

CLARA BARRUS

Author of 'Our Friend John Burroughs,' 'John Burroughs, Boy and Man,' and 'The Life and Letters of John Burroughs'

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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If 'twere not for my cat and dog,
I think I could not live.

POOR ANDREW

FOREWORD

JOHN BURROUGHS 'mightily loved dogs above all other animals,' and dogs mightily loved him. From youth up he gave his heart to dog after dog, as passages in his books, his Journals, and letters to friends eloquently prove. While it is commonly thought that he was chiefly engrossed with the birds and the wild flowers, it is a fact that nothing in Nature ever so deeply stirred his emotions as did his dog friends. He was singularly dependent upon them for the companionship and wordless sympathy which a man of his temperament craves. He wrote of dogs with peculiar understanding and sympathy.

One summer, on the home farm, long after he had passed three score and ten, when describing an adventure in the

fields with Taurus, and the tactics he had used, he added, 'Bees, bulls, and ugly dogs must be treated with decision.' But I fancy he had scant experience with ugly dogs, since dogs inclined to ugliness usually showed a friendly side to him. 'I can look in the face of an ugly dog,' he said, 'and win him, but with an ugly man I have less success, while with an ugly woman — I would turn and flee.' I have seen a crabbed Chow, who repelled all other friendly overtures, follow him about, docile as a kitten; I have seen his neighbor's blind dog forsake its master and bound away to follow Burroughs at the first sound of his voice, or even his step. He admitted that he could hardly have plead 'not guilty,' had his neighbor brought suit against him for alienating the dog's affections. Once when several friends were seated with Mr. Burroughs in a cottage where he was a guest, there

stole into the room a strange cur, wet and bedraggled, who seemed to say, 'I don't know just how I got here, nor why, but —' and then, without further hesitation, having scanned the company, he made directly for John Burroughs, who instinctively stooped and patted him, just to put him at ease. The interloper was so cheered by the friendly act that he climbed to the friendly knees, despite the half-hearted protests from the owner of the knees. The protests, however, insensibly merged into gentle chidings, and then to caressing tones, as the wet dog, unabashed, turned round and cuddled down comfortably.

To a boy correspondent who once asked of Burroughs what things he liked best to do, he replied that he liked to do almost everything that boys do, except to have anything to do with dog-fighting — unless it were to 'help

some little dog whip some big saucy cur.'

From California, when writing what proved to be his last letter to his son, along with messages to his grandchildren Burroughs included mention of their pet dog, sending the homely greeting that a dog could best understand — 'Scratch Jack's back for me.'

There was never a more pronounced case of 'Love me, love my dog' than that of Burroughs.

This little book of his tributes to his dog friends is compiled for other lovers of dogs, with the hope that it will call to mind the dogs they, too, have loved and lost, and deepen their sympathy for the dogs in whose companionship they are still blessed.

CLARA BARRUS,
Roxbury-in-the-Catskills

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MY DOG FRIENDS

CHAPTER I

DOG FRIENDS IN YOUTH

When John Burroughs was a lad on his father's dairy farm in the western Catskills, he was even chummier with the farm-dogs than with his brothers. There seemed more common ground on which they met: He and the dogs were keenly interested in many branches of natural history; he and they were always sniffing out an adventure, or a woodchuck. They were about equally averse to doing certain prescribed chores, and almost equally intent on bearing one another company when tasks from which they could not escape were being performed; for example, driving the cows to and from the pasture, hunt-

ing straying sheep or cattle on the mountain, picking up stone from the meadows, and treading the dog-churn when Old Bill, the ram, refused to do his *stunt*.

The dog-churn had a huge wheel, set at an angle, which went round and round as the dog, or the ram, standing in one place, would tread it. The wheel turned a shaft which had a crank, which worked a sweep, which lifted the churn-dasher — an eternal round, but not of pleasure. Cuff, the old mastiff, got so he knew when the churning hour was imminent, and would sneak off to hunt woodchucks. The old ram then had to mount the treadmill. But at times he got fractious, hanging back and settling down, and thus refusing to make the wheel go round. With both dog and ram rebellious, John and Eden had to take their turns at the wheel. In time they developed a scheme for securing

their freedom. It was the hetchel that came to their rescue. Now the hetchel is an instrument formerly used to comb the tow from flax, but the boys saw its possibilities for combing wool as well. They deftly arranged the hetchel on the big wheel behind the ram, so that when he started to sit down on his job, as it were, he felt the savage teeth of that hetchel prod him relentlessly. Up he got speedily, a sadder and a wiser ram, and proceeded to mark time in the approved way.

Once in later years when John Burroughs was being shown through an old mansion at Johnstown, New York, when the caretaker, indicating a curious-looking relic in the attic, asked, 'Have you ever seen a dog-churn?' he retorted, '*Yes, yes, and I've been the dog*'; and he hurried down the stairs as though afraid of being pressed again into service.

The community of interest shared by John and the farm-dogs seemed never-failing. John wanted a swimming-hole; so did the dogs, although his brothers hankered not at all for one, and John's most engaging overtures failed to enlist their help. The dogs, however, were most encouraging when John began exploring the pond in the valley with a view to building the dam. 'We will help you — let's do it now,' they said as plainly as dogs can say anything. And as the work progressed they were loud in their approval. Day after day they put as much energy and spirit in the undertaking as did John himself. For weeks, through rain and shine, boy and dogs toiled patiently till they had a water-tight stone-wall as high as John's head, to the making of which went a good many wagon-loads of stone and sod, all of which the boy lugged in his arms, aided and abetted by the capers

and comments and eloquent gestures of Cuff and Spot. Lad and dogs were often a sorry sight as they trudged wearily home to supper, for, as the dam neared completion, they had to work waist-deep in the water. If at times John's courage faltered, his partners rallied round him, subtly reminding him what good times they were going to have when the sweltering August days were upon them — when they would need the comfort of the swimming-hole as recompense for that tedious turning of the grindstone for the mowers. And when those days did come, boy and dogs reaped their reward. Striking their tasks, they would run panting from the hay-field, leaping into the water without the ceremony of removing shirt and trousers, in the one case, and heavy coats, in the other.

There were, throughout the years, several generations of Cuffs and Spots

on the Burroughs farm; the shepherd dogs and the collies were named Cuff, the hounds, Spot, although, at one time, a yellow, bob-tailed mastiff was also called Cuff. It was a Cuff that the boy, John, used to send into the barn to rout the hobgoblins from the great black hole underneath, before he himself would venture in to clean the stables. 'I was tortured with the thought of what might be lurking in that black abyss,' he said, 'and sent Cuff in every little while to scare 'em out.' As the years passed, every dog had his day — Cuffs came and went, Spots came and went. The farm boy never lost a pal without a pang, yet each newcomer quickly won his heart; and the character and prowess of the dogs that were gone were duly transmitted by word of mouth for years and years to come. The father of John Burroughs claimed that a certain Old Rove eclipsed all his

subsequent dogs. He was the Achilles among dogs, his master being the Judge. To-day a Cuff of recent years lingers on at the Old Home, although the man who once roamed the hills and wooed the trout streams with him now sleeps beside their old haunt — the Big Rock in the hillside pasture.

The farm-dogs figured conspicuously in the reminiscences in which John Burroughs indulged as he sauntered about the homestead farm in later years. At this spot, in this ash tree, Cuff treed a coon: The dog is waiting at the foot of the tree, barking vociferously, his barks growing sharper and sharper, as he urges the boys to hurry faster and shake down that coon. They arrive breathless; Wilson shins up the tree, Cuff now bounding about in delight. The climber fails to dislodge the growling creature, which at first hugs the limb, but soon begins to advance

upon him. Down that tree the bold climber goes — a good deal faster than he went up, while Cuff comments in disgust, and the coon commands the situation. In time, however, they bring him down with the gun. Even then he is 'game.' Dog and coon fight fiercely; they return bite for bite, till finally, when Cuff bites the coon through the small of the back, the plucky fellow gives up the ghost.

Hunting foxes on the mountain was one of the winter joys. On still, moonlit nights the boys would hear that weird call of Reynard up on Old Clump, and then another fox, farther away, answering him. The music of that long, trumpet-like bay of the hound as it followed the fox up hill and down dale! How it stirred the young Nimrods!

Before actually trying fox-hunting, John practiced shooting at big yellow pumpkins which his brothers would roll

down the steep side hill for him. Then, one eventful day, he set out with some older huntsmen and Spot, the hound. The men stationed him at a point on the runway of the fox, where he waited excitedly, gun in hand. Long and long he waited there, till, becoming chilled through, his hands benumbed, he rested the butt of the gun on the ground, and still stood motionless. All of a sudden, not fifty feet away, a large red fox, his tail tipped with white, came loping along. The sight so fascinated the lad — this pumpkin that was not a pumpkin — that he gazed spell-bound, while Mister Fox disappeared over a knoll. Chagrined, he trudged home, disgusted with foxes and hounds and the world in general: and all he could think to offer, when his brothers asked him why he didn't shoot the fox, was, '*B-b-because I had my m-m-mitten on.*'

In 'Pepacton' he gives glimpses

of youthful experiences on the home mountains with fox and hound:

'It is amusing when the hunter starts out of a winter morning, to see the hound probe the old tracks to determine how recent they are. He sinks his nose down deep in the snow so as to exclude the air from above, then draws a long full breath, giving sometimes an audible snort. If there remains the least effluvium of the fox, the hound will detect it. If it be very slight, it only sets his tail wagging; if it be strong, it unloosens his tongue.

'A fox cannot trip along the top of a stone-wall so lightly but that he will leave enough of himself to betray his course to the hound for hours afterward. . . . The fox baffles the hound most upon a hard crust of frozen snow: the scent will not hold to the smooth, bead-like granules.

'Judged by the eye alone, the fox is

the lightest and most buoyant creature that runs. His soft wrapping of fur conceals the muscular play and effort that are so obvious in the hound that pursues him, and he comes bounding along precisely as if blown by a gentle wind. His massive tail is carried as if it floated upon the air by its own lightness.

'The hound is not remarkable for his fleetness, but how he will hang! — often running until late into the night, and sometimes till morning, from ridge to ridge, from peak to peak; now on the mountain, now crossing the valley, now playing about a large slope of uplying pasture fields. . . .

'The hound is a most interesting dog. How solemn and long-visaged he is — how peaceful and well disposed! He is the Quaker among dogs. All the viciousness and currishness seem to have been weeded out of him: he seldom quarrels, or fights, or plays, like other

dogs. Two strange hounds, meeting for the first time, behave as civilly toward each other as two men. I know a hound ['Singer'] that has an ancient, wrinkled, human, far-away look that reminds one of the bust of Homer among the Elgin marbles. He looks like the mountains toward which his heart yearns so much.'

[I have seen Mr. Burroughs in his later years look into the solemn face of the hound, over at the Old Home, and talk respectfully to him, using quite a different tone than he used to the collie. The farm hands called the hound 'Bill,' but John Burroughs felt that his dignity demanded quite a different name, and always addressed him as 'Socrates.']

'The hound is a great puzzle to the farm-dog; the latter, attracted by his baying, comes barking and snarling through the fields, bent on picking a quarrel; he intercepts the hound, snubs and insults and annoys him in every

way possible, but the hound heeds him not. If the dog attacks him, he gets away as best he can and goes on with the trail; the cur bristles and barks and struts about for a while, then goes back to the house, evidently thinking the hound a lunatic, which he is, for the time being — a monomaniac — the slave and victim of one idea. I saw the master of a hound one day arrest him in full course, to give one of the hunters time to get to a certain runway; the dog cried and struggled to free himself, and would listen neither to threats nor caresses. Knowing he must be hungry, I offered him my lunch, but he would not touch it. I put it in his mouth, but he threw it contemptuously from him. We coaxed and petted and reassured him, but he was under a spell; he was bereft of all thought or desire but the one passion to pursue that trail.'

'One marked difference between the

greyhound and all other hounds and dogs is, that it can pick up its game while running at full speed, a feat that no other dog can do. The foxhound, or farm-dog, will run over a fox or a rabbit many times without being able to seize it.'

['Thy wit is as quick as the greyhound's mouth — it catches.'

— SHAKESPEARE]

As boys and men John and Eden Burroughs had followed the hound on the mountain for foxes, although Eden's prowess in that direction always greatly outshone his brother's. Eden was wont to describe their fox-hunts, especially one in which John's part was chiefly that of a hanger-on. He would end the tale with a twinkle in his eye, saying, 'Well, I shot the fox and got five dollars for his skin, but John wrote a piece about it and got twenty-five.' ['A White Day and a Red Fox.']

After Eden's death his brother was deeply moved by the widow's account of Eden's last fox-hunt with his old hound, 'Wilder,' — a dream-trail on Bob Mountain: As master and hound had stood looking out on the mountain they had traversed so many times, Eden had said: 'Wilder, old boy, there's a fox up there, but we'll never get it — no, Wilder, we'll never climb Old Bob again.' And the dog whined and came closer to his pal, while both master and dog looked out of eyes blurred by oncoming blindness. Wilder's condition became so pitiable that, in mercy, they took his life, and with the very gun that had killed many a fox he had trailed. For two days his master sobbed and lamented him, and then a blow, as from a hidden hand, laid him low. On rallying from a period of semi-unconsciousness, as speech again became intelligible, he told of seeming to be with

Wilder on a long tramp on the other side of Bob Mountain — trying hard to reach the top, then come on down home. 'We clambered up and up,' he said, 'but kept getting lost; and when we started down on the north side, we found we were onto another spur — *we couldn't find the way home, nohow.*' A few more days and the long trail was ended for hunter and hound.

Burroughs gives, in 'Pepacton,' this episode in the life of one of the earlier Cuffs: 'I knew a farmer in New York State who had a very large bob-tailed churn-dog by the name of Cuff. The farmer kept a large dairy and made a great deal of butter, and it was the business of Cuff to spend nearly half of each summer day treading the endless round of the churning-machine. During the remainder of the day he had plenty of time to rest and sleep, and sit on his hips and survey the landscape.

One day, sitting thus, he discovered a woodchuck about forty rods from the house, on a steep side hill, feeding about near his hole, which was beneath a large rock. The old dog, forgetting his stiffness, and remembering the fun he had had with woodchucks in his earlier days, started off at his highest speed, vainly hoping to catch this one before he could get to his hole. But the woodchuck seeing the dog come laboring up the hill, sprang to the mouth of his den, and, when his pursuer was only a few rods off, whistled tauntingly and went in. This occurred several times, the old dog marching up the hill, and then marching down again, having had his labor for his pains. I suspect that he revolved the subject in his mind while he revolved the great wheel of the churning-machine, and that some turn or other brought him a happy thought, for, the next time, he showed himself a

strategist. Instead of giving chase to the woodchuck when first discovered, he crouched down to the ground, and, resting his head on his paws, watched him. The woodchuck kept working away from his hole, lured by the tender clover, but, not unmindful of his safety, lifted himself upon his haunches every few moments, and surveyed the approaches. Presently, after the woodchuck had let himself down from one of these attitudes of observation and resumed his feeding, Cuff started swiftly but stealthily up the hill, precisely in the attitude of a cat when she is stalking a bird. When the woodchuck rose up again, Cuff was perfectly motionless and half hid by the grass. When he again resumed his clover, Cuff sped up the hill as before, this time crossing a fence, but in a low place, and so nimbly that he was not discovered. Again the woodchuck was on the outlook, again

Cuff was motionless and hugging the ground. As the dog neared his victim he was partially hidden by a swell in the earth, but still the woodchuck from his outlook reported "All right," when Cuff, having not twice as far to run as the woodchuck, threw all stealthiness aside and rushed directly for the hole. At that moment the woodchuck discovered his danger, and, seeing that it was a race for life, leaped as I never saw a marmot leap before. But he was two seconds too late, his retreat was cut off, and the powerful jaws of the old dog closed upon him.

'The next season Cuff tried the same tactics again with like success, but when the third woodchuck had taken up his abode at the fatal hole, the old churner's wits and strength had begun to fail him, and he was baffled in each attempt to capture the animal.'

The feud which existed between boys

and dogs, and the burrowing woodchucks (which were such a menace to the farmer), did not abate when the boy grew to manhood. Many a time, even as a septuagenarian, would he help the farm-dogs hunt out a woodchuck which had taken refuge in a stone-wall. Some of his later observations on dog and 'chuck are thus recorded in 'The Summit of the Years':

'Though the woodchuck's muscles are flabby, his heart is stout. The farm-dog can kill him, but he cannot make him show fear or dismay; he is game to the last. Twice I have seen him from my porch at Woodchuck Lodge put on so bold a front and become so aggressive, when surprised in the middle of a field by a big shepherd dog, that the dog did not dare attack him, but circled about, seeking some unfair advantage, only to be met at every point by those threatening, grating teeth. The wood-

chuck was far from his hole, and he kept charging the dog and driving him nearer, and nearer the stone-wall, where his own safety lay. An observer inoculated with the idea of animal reason would have said that the tactics of the 'chuck were premeditated; but I am sure he was too much engrossed with the task of defending himself from the jaws of that dog to do any logical thinking or planning. It was only the fortune of battle that finally brought the hunter and the hunted near the hole of safety, when, seeing his chance, the woodchuck made a sudden, successful dash, too hurried, I fancy, even to whistle his usual note of defiance. In the other case, the dog was of a still more timid nature, and when the surprised woodchuck showed fight, he concluded that he had no business at all with that particular 'chuck, which actually chased him from the meadow. I

can still see the woodchuck's bristling, expanded tail as he drove fiercely after the fleeing dog, which, with a tail anything but threatening, escaped over the wall into the road.'

CHAPTER II

COMRADES IN THE MIDDLE YEARS

I DO not recall hearing Mr. Burroughs speak of any dog friends during the ten years that he lived in Washington, D.C., but after resigning his government position there in 1873, and establishing his home at West Park on the Hudson, he had several dog friends to whom he was tenderly attached. 'Winter Sunshine,' the first book to come from his pen after he began to live at Riverby, contains a passage which doubtless refers to the first dog comrade to cheer his river home, a little dog named Rab, a mixture of black and tan terrier and mastiff, with a remarkable degree of canine intelligence. The passage which follows shows his preference in an outdoor companion:

'You will generally fare better to take your dog than to invite your neighbor. Your cur-dog is a true pedestrian, and your neighbor is very likely a small politician. The dog enters thoroughly into the spirit of the enterprise; he is not indifferent or preoccupied; he is constantly sniffing adventure, laps at every spring, looks upon every field and wood as a new world to be explored, is ever on some fresh trail, knows something important will happen a little farther on, gazes with the true wonder-seeing eyes, whatever the spot or whatever the road, finds it good to be there — in short, is just that happy, delicious, excursive vagabond that touches one at so many points, and whose human prototype in a companion robs miles and leagues of half their power to fatigue.'

In his note-book, May 9, 1875, we read:

'Rab and I went to the woods and to the muck swamp. No foliage yet. The buds just swelling. Saw the bloodroot in bloom along the road and in the woods. Found a little arbutus, and on a western slope just back of the hill, lots of corydalis. The first warm south wind of the season — apparently from the heart of the South. Heard a water thrush and several warblers.'

Both master and mistress at Riverby learned to love Rab dearly, but the companionship lasted barely a year. 'We could not keep house without Rab,' the master had often said. But Rab was taken with the distemper, and, after apparently recovering, had a relapse. In spite of their tender care, they knew his days were numbered. When too weak to lift his head, Rab recognized the voice of his master.

To a friend, the master wrote:

'We expect every hour will be his last.

It is almost like losing a child. Indeed, half the people do not mourn so much over the death of their children as we do over Rab. He is a homely cur, but you can hardly imagine how much he has been to us. He has been the life and light of the place for a year.'

When the end came, the household was indeed bereft. The mistress wept piteously. The master kept back his tears but plied his hoe and spade without speaking, as he made ready the grave for his cherished friend. The notebook records the loss:

'*Sept.* 4, 1875. Rab is dead, and it seems as if a chapter in my life had closed. We buried him this morning by the rock near the path to the spring, where we shall pass and repass in all our farm work, and where the poor dog can hear the footfalls of the horse he loved so well.

'I may live to be an old man, but I

shall not live long enough to forget Rab. There was nothing between my heart and his; he was wholly within the circle of my most private affection; he touched me warm and close. I do not know in what way I should have loved a child differently — more deeply, perhaps, but not more genuinely. If my love for Rab was not the precious gold of the heart, it certainly was the silver. In my younger days I should have thought less of him, but, next to the members of my own family, Death could not have singled out an object half so precious and necessary to me. So great is my need of a comrade, an untalking companion, on my walks, or boating, or about the farm; and, next to one's bosom friend, what companion like a dog? Your thought is his thought, your wish is his wish, and where you desire to go, that place of all others is preferable to him. It was bliss enough

for Rab to be with me, and it was a never-failing source of pleasure for me to be with Rab. Why should my grief be so acute? Only a dog. My neighbor, or my friend, dies, or my man-servant, or maid-servant, who has served me long, and my grief is far less poignant. My dog is a part of myself. He has no separate or independent existence; he lives wholly in and for me. But my friend, or my neighbor, revolves in an orbit of his own. He has his own schemes and purposes, and touches me only casually, or not closely at all. My dog is interested in everything I do. Then he represents the spirit of holiday, of fun, of adventure. The world is full of wonders to him, and in a journey of a mile he has many adventures. Every journey is an excursion, a sally into an unknown land, teeming with curiosities. A dog lives only ten or fifteen years, but think how much he

crowds into that space, how much energy and vitality he lives up!'

Some weeks later a brief entry tells of boating on the river, and adds, 'Rover with us.' Rab is dead; long live Rover!

Rover, a well-bred, spirited black and tan, he re-christened Rosemary Rose, because his eyes were 'like a girl's,' and his tongue 'like a rose-leaf.' His tail was 'like a rush.' He tramped the fields and woods with his master, camped with him on the Rondout, and did his dog best to make him forget Rab.

The Journal tells of some of their good times together:

'Rose and I went to Sutcliff's pond and spent the day. Caught a fine string of black bass. . . .'

'Rose and I went to the woods. . . . We found corydalis, bloodroot, adder's tongue, and liver-leaf in bloom. Rose found a black snake behind the wall sunning himself, and barked violently,

dodging every moment as if he had always dealt with snakes and knew how they strike. I killed the "sarpent" with a stone. . . . We sat down by the falls of Black Creek and listened to the roar.'

Once when Rose and his master were in a row-boat on the river and the river became very rough, a queer expression came over the dog's face. His master thought he was going to laugh outright, but, instead, up came his dinner, and poor Rose was the most forlorn dog that ever wagged a tail. His plight became so pitiful his comrade made for the shore as speedily as possible.

As soon as his master would begin to harness his horse, Rose would begin to bark like mad and circle all round the place. If he saw him putting bread and grapes into his pocket, he knew that act meant a trip to the woods. One autumn when the mistress went away to a Water Cure, master and dog kept house alone,

and, as the man bragged, did 'the minimum amount of work, and had the maximum of good times.' Some of the letters which went to the invalid recorded their doings:

'Rose has talked a good deal of the wonders he saw in Poughkeepsie. He made the acquaintance of lots of dogs. I had to keep an eye on him. He sits at table and helps himself, and I take what's left.'

Again:

'Rose and I want to go along with your trunk, but can't scrape up enough money. He doesn't like boarding with me,— thinks I have my meals too irregularly.'

Later:

'Rosemary Rose is well but talks about the Water Cure every day. A few days ago he fought the Battle of Lundy's Bridge and great was the carnage — one drop of "claret" on his

antagonist after half an hour's fighting! But he routed the enemy and pursued it vigorously. Since then he has been a great hero.'

Still later:

'Rose and I have been hunting to-day and got a partridge, a pigeon, and a gray squirrel. Rose treed them all. I never saw a dog hunt so. To-night he is tired out and groans and wants me to hold him. I have a coal fire in the grate and the game is now cooking over it. . . . I wish you had the partridge. He is a fat fellow . . . but Rose and I will think of you when we eat him. I have picked you a fine lot of chestnuts. Rose is keeping them for you, and to-day we got you some brilliant maple leaves.'

For two or three years this little comrade brightened his master's life. Then, one August day, just after he had returned from camping with 'Aaron' in Canadian wilds, he was called upon to

mourn his loss. A journal entry on August 5, 1877, tells the story:

'My beloved dog, Rosemary Rose, died this morning from poisoning. . . . I do not need to write it in my diary to remember it. It is burnt into my heart. Oh, a bitter day. None may know what that dog was to me. He and Rab were my children and my only comrades. I am quite desolate. . . . We dug his grave this afternoon — Aaron and I — but to-night he lies in his bed at the foot of the stairs for the last time.

'His life was identified with mine as that of no human being ever has been, or perhaps can be. He seemed more than usually affectionate and demonstrative in the morning when I got up. Did he have a presentiment of his coming fate? He came to my bedside and whined, and licked my feet all the time I was dressing, and came near tripping me up as we came down stairs.'

There, under the old gilly flower apple tree, they buried Rose, and the master paused often in his passing, muttering endearing words to the dog that never before had failed to respond. A few days later and the Journal records:

'I am sad and depressed to the very marrow of my bones. The thought of my poor dog keeps me from sleeping.'

It was too painful to be without a dog, and ten days after Rosemary's death the bereaved master wrote in his Journal:

'Got a new dog in Poughkeepsie with which I am trying to bridge over the chasm — have named him Lark.'

Lark had passed him in the street and taken a shine to him, which so touched the lonely man that, then and there, he bargained with the owner, buying him for a few dollars, and happy dog and man came home together — boon companions from first sight. Lark was a

mongrel, a short black and yellow dog with a queer-shaped head. He was a little fellow. Together they studied the birds, they hunted bees, they worked in the vineyard, and they rode long distances in the buggy, to examine the banks, Lark offering moral support, if not being an adept at figures. Such an affectionate, peaceful little pal! He would unburden his mind threateningly when safe on the buggy seat with his master, but showed remarkable facility for keeping out of trouble when at close quarters with belligerent dogs. 'He had no more fight in him than I have,' said his master, 'he was a pacifist through and through.'

Many an entry in the Journals for the next few years tells of the good times they had together:

[1877.] 'My health is perfect these crisp December days. . . . I walk four miles in great glee, my dog and I.'

Again:

[*May*, 1878.] 'Lark and I went on a long walk through the woods — found the nests of a robin, a kingbird, a bush sparrow, a hawk, and a gray squirrel, and started a rabbit from her form. Besides, Lark had a tussle with a mink, and the mink got away. I first saw it coming up the creek on the rocks and stones. I sat down and waited for him to come up, but within a few rods of me he saw or smelled me and ran under some large stones. Then I poked him with my cane and he came boldly out in Lark's face. Lark caught him, but dropped him in a hurry, both dog and mink crying out; and then he escaped as quickly as if he had dropped into the earth. Where he went to, I have no idea.'

'A long walk to the woods through knee-deep snow, carried Lark on my shoulder a part of the way. No one had

yet been to the woods, only a big dog whose track we saw. We started up several partridges over in cedar lane.'

In August, 1881, Lark proved himself a first-class camp-mate when the families of Burroughs and Gilder tried coöperative camping on Auchmoody Lake. But a month later, when the Burroughs family came back from a sojourn at Ocean Grove, great was their distress to find poor Lark sick unto death from the bite of a large Newfoundland dog. Two days later the sequel is told in the Journal:

'My dear dog Lark died to-day. I sat by him the last two hours of his life. So he, too, is already of the Past! Oh, greedy, remorseless Past! not even is one's dog safe from your all-devouring maw! This was (ah! that fatal "was") my third dog, and the most tender and affectionate of them all. Dog of the gentle heart! more a child than a dog.

How much I have buried in the grave with thee! How can I again resume my walks through the old lanes and by-paths and wood roads where we have strolled together for four years past, summer and winter, without thy gentle comradeship? All the landscape for miles and miles we have read over and over, as two boys read a story-book. No forest way or nook or retreat but knew us many times. The "Idyl of the Honey-Bee" was thine as well as mine, the "Notes of a Walker" were thy notes as well. It seems as if I could almost give my right hand to have thee back. A vital part of me is gone, something that knitted me to the fields and woods, and that made life more sweet.

'Lark was always childlike, not puppyish, but like a proud and pampered child. He could not stand even the look of anger from me. Let me approach him, any time or place, and look sternly

at him, and he would throw himself upon his back and put up his little red feet supplicatingly. There was no blame he would not take upon himself, and humbly beg forgiveness for. He had no prowess, no courage — could hardly kill a squirrel unaided.

'How pathetic now seem his wanderings with his faint yet yearning and sagacious heart, when I lost him in Kingston, on my return from Roxbury, and he made his way back, ten miles, to Father North's in Olive, where I had spent Sunday, and where we had left Wife and Julian. What trepidation, what bewilderment had he not suffered. The hostile dogs, the hooting boys, the threatening cattle, and the long, dusty, tedious way! If I knew where he passed the night, or where he rested by day, I think I would go there just to gaze on the spot. The dry leaves upon which he made his bed, and where he renewed his

resolution not to be discouraged, or to give up the search for me, would be precious to my eyes.

'One's pleasure with a dog is unmixed. There are no set-backs. They make no demands upon you, as does a child; no care, no interruption, no intrusion. If you are busy, or want to sleep, or read, or be with your friend, they are as if they were not. When you want them, they are at your elbow, and ready for any enterprise. And the measure of your love they always return, heaped up.

'Ah, well! I cannot help but mourn; my daily companion and comrade is gone. The door that opens and shuts but once, to dogs as well as men, has closed behind him, and I shall see him no more, no more! I buried him at the north end of the rock where my other dogs lie. In the afternoon I dug his grave, and in the twilight buried him,

Julian looking on, the only mourner.'

To a friend, a few months after Lark had gone, he wrote:

'Eventful months have sped by since last I heard from you.... We are all here except poor Lark.... He has joined my other dogs beneath the grass beside the old rock, and also, I have no doubt, in the happy hunting-grounds beyond.... I have mourned and still mourn him deeply. He was my muse and the inspiration of all my walks. The "Notes of a Walker" were mainly his. He would sniff out the fact, and I, as his secretary, would chronicle it. I doubt if I shall ever give my heart to another dog to be widowed in this way — it is too painful.'

But he did. His dog comrades, and all that they contributed to his joy in life, eloquently prove that

> "'Tis better to have loved and lost
> Than never to have loved at all.'

Laddie, a mixture of water spaniel and black and tan, with bristly hair, was his next dog friend. I recall one episode in their comradeship which he used to tell about:

One day toward spring he and Laddie started to go across the river on the ice to Hyde Park. The ice was so brittle that they had to pick their way carefully. Looking up, he saw the dog running for dear life toward the shore, while the shore seemed to be going down stream very fast. The ice-harvesters had cut a canal in the river and the tide was carrying up the whole body of ice. The ice moved up a way and stopped. But when the tide turned, it would carry the whole body of ice down the river. Both man and dog were frightened. They knew they must get to the home shore as fast as ever they could. Laddie trembled piteously as he seemed to entreat: 'Dear Master, don't,

I beg of you, go back across that ice — *don't!* but if you *do*, I'll have to go with you.' And go he did. The man's knees were shaking as he again embarked on the ice, Laddie, with four knees to shake instead of two, following closely. A little after they gained the shore, the ice went down the river, leaving a great open space along the shore.

Laddie's end is sorrowfully recorded in the Journal, March 12, 1888:

'On Monday my little dog, Laddie, my fourth dog, met his end, murdered, like Lark, by Dick Atkin's vicious brute. He was following George when he fell in with a small dog near Atkin's between whom and himself, it seems, there was a standing feud. Whenever and wherever they met, they fought.

'George went on and left them fighting, thinking no harm would come of it. Presently the old dog heard the fracas and came out and pitched into the

smallest dog, as is his custom, and in a few minutes Laddie was left for dead.

'When I came to him, about an hour afterward, I saw he was still alive. I lifted him up and laid him on the dry grass where the sun shone warm on him, and protected him from the wind with some boards. He breathed and winked, but did not recognize me. Three hours later I came to him and, seeing him still alive, spoke to him as of old. He made no sign, but instantly all his wounds, which had dried up in the sun, began to bleed afresh. My voice had quickened his pulse, and the bloody drops began to trickle down all over his poor bruised body. It cut me to the heart. They were like bloody tears appealing to me for help. Shortly afterward he breathed his last.

'I loved him much — how much I did not know till he was gone, as is al-

ways the case; and his love for me was unmeasured. . . .'

In the years to come, as he told of the blood starting afresh at the sound of his voice, his eyes would be blinded with tears, and his voice was infinitely tender as he murmured, 'Oh, Laddie, Laddie!'

Several other dogs, in turn, cheered and saddened the household at Riverby; most of them, strange to say, met a tragic end. The dearest of them were Rab and Rose and Lark and Laddie. To the last of life, when speaking of them, or pointing out their graves, he who cherished each in his inmost heart, would call their names in wistful tones, 'Rab and Rose, and Lark and Laddie.'

However, so much of joy went into the comradeship with his dogs that the losses must not be unduly emphasized. As he wrote a friend, his dogs helped him to write his books; his dogs made each sallying forth in the morning an

adventure; but, unfortunately, these adventures receive scant mention in the Journal; he and his comrades were too busy getting the joy out of life to journalize about it. But when the dogs were wrested from him, the bereaved master instinctively turned to his Journal and recorded his sorrow at their passing. As his son grew older, the father felt less need of dog comrades than in the earlier years, though he and Julian were then, and always, devoted to dogs. When Julian was a little boy, his father amused him by making up doggerel about his dogs. One began thus:

'Hark to the tale of my dog, Lark!
He can bark,
After dark,
And hit the mark,
Way over to Hyde Park.'

This was not so bad, but there was another, never-ending one, about Rose:

'Rosemary Rose,
Just you suppose,
When the wind blows,
And down come the snows,
You should kick off the clothes
And thus expose
Both your toes
And your nose,
Until they were froze. . . .'

By this time the child would stop his ears and plead, 'Oh, Papa! stop, stop!'

I find mention of a dog called 'Nay-Nay' in the Journal, in 1881 — 'Nay-Nay and I are keeping house alone' — but I do not recall any stories of Nay-Nay, nor does the Journal say whence he came nor whither he went.

During 1888 and 1889 a big, shaggy black dog with a white breast, a cross between a setter and some common breed, added to the joy of life at Riverby. They called him 'I-Know.' When Julian is away from home his father writes him:

'I-Know is fat and happy, but thinks the Cook stingy [he being 'the Cook']. So she is — for one whole day there was no bread in the house, but plenty of clams.'

Again:

'I-Know and the cat are happy. We are blasting out rocks and plowing under the buckwheat.'

Another welcome glimpse is afforded by the Journal, November 26, 1889:

'A bright day. Spent the afternoon up by the creek screening gravel. I had real enjoyment — the bright sun, the full bounding stream hastening along within a few feet of me, the trees and rocks, the wild, secluded place, my dog, I-Know, capering about, the brisk exercise — it all went to the right spot.'

And then the sad *dénouement:*

'*December* 23, 1889. My dog, I-Know, is dead — killed Friday night by the gravel-train, as he tried to pass under it.

It sends a deep pang through me — my faithful dog, my sole companion these days and nights. I sit here in my deserted house to-night without him. Every now and then, half forgetting, I turn to see where he is, or to wonder why he does not come.

'I-Know's only fault was his excessive good nature, and his cowardice in the presence of other dogs, or of any form of supposed danger. Very intelligent and handsome, and gentle as a lamb. Even the cats imposed upon him and made a rug of him — fit mate of his weak and sensitive master.

'I am less grieved than when my other dogs have died, because I have had experience and will not be caught that way again — will not again allow a dog to take such a deep hold upon my affections. After a time, I suppose, I can lose dogs without emotion. But how I shall miss the faithful creature from my soli-

tary life; and how long will his memory be fresh in my heart! I brought a basket of bones for him, as usual, which now the cats will have to gnaw. . . .'

In 1891 a dog called Dan ('Dan Bundy-ah'), bought of one of his vineyard helpers, gets occasional scant mention in Journal and letters. To a friend he writes:

'I have a dog now, Dan, and Julian has doves, so that we can do our own barking and grow our own squabs.' But Dan's character and fate remain in obscurity. . . . . .

Toward the last of the eighteen-nineties, a little dog, named Nip, came to live at Riverby, — a gift from the mistress of the mansion across the river at Hyde Park. Nip was a little fox terrier, white, with a short tail, and a black spot on one eye and ear.

'Nip and I are going to an auction,' wrote Nip's master to Julian when the

lad was away from home. The only mention of Nip in the Journal, in the autumn of 1898, is this:

'I make my last entry this month to record the death of my beloved dog, Nip, which occurred yesterday afternoon by his falling through the high railroad bridge over Black Creek. We went on a walk up the track, as we have done a hundred times. I stopped at this end of the bridge to look down upon the creek. Nip passed over. I heard a train coming down the track and called him back. He came to near the end, when he paused, and in some way his hind feet slipped off the tie and he fell through before my eyes. He struck heavily on soft ground, got up and ran, crying, a few yards, and fell in his death agony. When I got to him he had ceased to breathe.

'It is one of the worst shocks I ever had and quite stunned me. For a mo-

ment the whole universe seemed bereft, and my whole outlook upon life changed.

'I laid his limp body beside the abutment of the bridge and came home in the twilight and passed a wretched night. When I was not thinking of him, I was dreaming of him. I dreamed of sending two girls for his body with a pole to which they were to tie it. I got the strings and pole for them. Then I dreamed that the railroad men had buried him, and had shot him before doing so; and Mrs. B. guided me to the spot, and I dug him up.

'This morning I brought him over here [Slabsides] in a basket, and laid him down once more beside the fire, that my eyes might behold him again in his old place. What a counterfeit of sleep!

'I did not know I loved the dog so. Now Hiram is gone, Nip was my only companion — almost a part of myself.'

November 2. Alone at Slabsides. Of all the domestic animals, none calls forth so much love, solicitude, and sorrow as the dog. He occupies the middle place between the other animals and man. Our love for him is below that for our fellows, and above that we have for any other dumb creature. How many men there are now in the world, millions of them, whose love for their dogs is next to that they have for friends and families, and their grief at their loss next to a domestic bereavement!

'My grief for Nip has lost the acuteness of the first day and night, but I carry in my heart a constant heavy sorrow. I rather wish I had buried him in some secluded spot near by (instead of here in front of the cabin), where I could have gone on occasion, withdrawn from other thoughts and things. I fear I shall cease to notice the humble grave constantly before me.'

A year later, alone and lonely at Slabsides, where so often his brother Hiram, and Nip, had shared the sweet solitude, he wrote his son, away at Harvard, 'If I only had Nip or Hiram!' I have heard him say that often at twilight, he and Hiram (with whom there were few or no intellectual interests) would sit and talk of the old days on the home farm; talk of the dogs they had known in their youth, and of dog friends of later years. One of his Journal entries, in 1891, in which he is considering where he would be buried, refers to his repugnance to cemeteries, and adds that, rather than be buried in one, he would choose a grave beside his dogs at Riverby, or else in one of the old fields at home. In later years he held to this last-named choice, deciding definitely upon a place beside his Boyhood Rock in a hillside pasture on the home farm.

CHAPTER III

DOG NATURE

THERE was Rover the II, in the later years, of whom one gets occasional glimpses in the essays and the Journal. In 1908 he and Rover are together at Slabsides, 'writing on evolution.' Later he speaks of dining contentedly with his dog at Slabsides — frugally also — on puffed rice and milk, rather than leave that peaceful retreat and attend a dinner at the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

A former teacher at Vassar who used to visit Slabsides with the 'Wake Robin Club,' tells of being there with the students one day when she and the Sage of Slabsides walked to the spring for a bucket of water. On the way back he put the bucket down to survey the sur-

rounding scene. His dog came and drank out of the bucket. His master chided him a little, poured a little water over the edge of the bucket, and, saying, 'I guess the rascal didn't hurt it,' carried what was left along the path to the cabin — a case of 'love me, love my dog,' without restrictions.

When John Muir visited John Burroughs at Slabsides, the two men sat before the big fireplace, far into the night, while Muir talked of his wanderings in the high Sierras, and in Alaska, telling especially of his dog, Stickeen, and their adventures on Alaskan glaciers. Burroughs often spoke of Muir's 'Stickeen' as an 'immortal dog story,' fit to rank with Dr. Brown's 'Rab and his Friends.' He used to speak of Matthew Arnold's animal poems, too, with high regard: 'I read them with tears — my own cats and dogs have been so loved.'

In the years when Burroughs used to camp in Woodland Valley in the southern Catskills, he and his campmates had to look sharp for their larder; not only on account of the porcupines, and raccoons, and lynxes, but the backwoods cattle, hungry for salt; and even Larkin's dog, kept them watchful. In 'Riverby' he gives this episode:

'The raid which Larkin's dog made upon our camp was amusing rather than annoying. He was a very friendly and intelligent shepherd dog, probably a collie. Hardly had we sat down to our first lunch in camp before he called on us. But as he was disposed to be too friendly, and to claim too large a share of the lunch, we rather gave him the cold shoulder. He did not come again; but a few evenings afterwards, as we sauntered over to the house, the dog suddenly conceived a bright project: He seemed to say to himself, on seeing

us: "There come both of them now, just as I have been hoping they would; now, while they are away, I will run quickly over and know what they have got that a dog can eat."

'My companion saw the dog get up on our arrival and go quickly in the direction of our camp, and something in the cur's manner suggested to him the object of his departure. He called my attention to the fact and we hastened back. On cautiously nearing the camp, the dog was seen amid the pails in the shallow water of the creek, investigating them. He had uncovered the butter and was about to taste it, when we shouted, and he made quick steps for home, with a very "kill-sheep" look. When we again met him at the house, next day, he could not look us in the face, but sneaked off, utterly crestfallen. This was a clear case of reasoning on the part of the dog, and, after-

ward, a clear case of a sense of guilt from wrong-doing. The dog will probably be a man before any other animal.'

[See what the Burroughs of later years has to say about this 'clear case of reasoning on the part of the dog,' page 69.]

'Riverby' contains another dog story which runs as follows:

'A boy who had caught a red squirrel in his wire trap had a very bright and nimble dog about the size of a fox, that seemed to be very sure he could catch a red squirrel under any circumstances, if only the trees were out of the way. So the boy went to the middle of an open field with his caged squirrel — the dog, who seemed to know what was up, dancing and jumping about him.

'It was in midwinter; the snow had a firm crust that held boy and dog alike. The dog was drawn back a few yards and the squirrel liberated. Then began

one of the most exciting races I have witnessed for a long time. It was impossible for the lookers-on not to be convulsed with laughter, though neither dog nor squirrel seemed to regard the matter as much of a joke. The squirrel had all his wits about him and kept them ready for instant use. He did not show the slightest confusion. He was no match for the dog in fair running, and he discovered this fact in less than three seconds; he must win, if at all, by strategy. Not a straight course for the nearest tree, but a zigzag course. Every instant the dog was sure the squirrel was his, and every instant he was disappointed. It was incredible and bewildering to him. The squirrel dodged this way and that. The dog looked astonished and vexed.

'Then the squirrel issued from between his hind legs and made three jumps toward the woods before he was

discovered. Our sides ached with laughter, cruel as it may seem. It was evident the squirrel would win. The dog seemed to redouble his efforts. He would overshoot the game, or shoot by it to the right or the left. The squirrel was the smaller craft and could out-tack him easily. One more leap and the squirrel was up a tree, and the dog was overwhelmed with confusion and disgust. He could not believe his senses. "Not catch a squirrel in such a field as that! Go to, I will have him yet!" And he bounded up the tree as high as one's head, and then bit at the bark of it in his anger and chagrin.

'The boy says his dog has never bragged since about catching red squirrels "if only the trees were out of reach"!'

I think it was in the reign of Rover the II that he wrote the three following passages about the dog:

'One thing which shows the low psychic life of the dog is his enormous capacity for sleep. If nothing is doing, he can apparently sleep all the time, sleep all night, and sleep all day, the week through. Physical activity, or nothing, with him. He has little or no mind to keep awake. Evidently he does not think, nor brood, nor reminisce. He runs, or he sleeps.

'One trait I envy my dog: he never finds a walk or a run over the same route tiresome or uninteresting. The moment we start he is all alertness and expectation, the old and familiar become new and strange at once. Adventure lurks on every hand; he is sure something exciting will happen around the corner, or behind that rock, or over that knoll.

'He is the true pedestrian, always on the trail, or near the trail, of some notable game. If he sits down for a moment

he is constantly feeling the air with his nose; his interest rarely flags. To his heightened instinct other people's cats, other people's hens, other people's cows, or pigs, or sheep, are fit subjects for reprisal. Oh, if my own interest and powers of observation could always be heightened by a walk as his are!'

When Burroughs was with the Harriman Alaskan Expedition, in 1899, they visited an Eskimo encampment in Siberia. As they walked about amid the skin-covered huts, and regarded with wonderment the strange little people who reminded Burroughs of 'grotesque dolls filled with sawdust,' they came upon some frightened dogs, who, as the party came in at one end of the encampment, hurried out at the other. Evidently afraid of such queerly garbed creatures as Americans, they fled to the mountains, where they sat and howled their mournful protests.

In Jamaica, in 1902, he felt a great pity for the dogs. They were half-starved, some of them mere walking skeletons. He saw one famished creature licking the ground where a little flour had been spilled. In the city of Kingston, Jamaica, the roosters crowed the whole night through, and the dogs were not far behind them in making night hideous. The dogs in Jamaica seemed to have lost all their spirit because of the fleas and ticks: 'Poor cur,' he writes, 'how wretched and forlorn he looks! That he can bark at all is a wonder. And it is only in town that he does bark, and in the cool of the night. In the country he looks at you wistfully, or languidly searches his own body for the pests that make his life miserable.'

From 1903 onward, this lover of dogs inquired much more closely into the question of animal behavior and animal intelligence as contrasted with hu-

man intelligence than he had previously. Scattered through at least four of his books of later years ('Ways of Nature,' 'Leaf and Tendril,' 'The Summit of the Years,' and 'Field and Study') are discussions on these matters. He objected to the romancers about Nature depicting the dog as a tool-using animal; and to their claiming human intelligence for dogs merely because they display certain human traits. Of course he knew that dogs show gleams of reason, as do other animals in domestication, but he valued his dog just because he was a dog; he would not have had him less canine, or more human.

The following paragraphs are from 'The Reasonable but Unreasoning Animals' ('Leaf and Tendril'):

'My dog and I are boon companions. I can live with him almost as with a brother, and yet I see him across a gulf.

I catch a glimpse of that gulf, for example, when I see by his manner that he wants to lie down before the open fire, but, the poker or stick of wood being in the way, instead of removing or pushing it to one side, as he could so easily do, he sits or half reclines there, and looks helplessly at the obstacle in the way. I get up and remove it and he lies down. The removal of that poker on his part would require a certain detachment and viewing of himself in relation to other things, of which he is not capable; and yet I know had the obstacle barred the way to the retreat of a mouse or a chipmunk, he would have removed it in a hurry, because the scent of the game would have stimulated his instincts, or set up a reflex action, and put his paws in vigorous motion. He will, in an awkward kind of way, try to remove the burrs and bidens seeds from his coat, and bite at a sliver in his

foot — these things irritate him and hence sustain a much closer relation to him than did the poker or stick of wood; his instinct of self-defense is more or less aroused by them.

'One's dog will come to cover when it rains, but can one think of him as putting on any cover to keep off the rain? or as bringing in his blanket out of the wet, unless especially trained? All such minor human acts are quite beyond the capacity of our wild or domestic animals, requiring, as they do, a certain self-detachment and viewing of things as they are in their relations.

'Touch the spring of an animal's instinct or inherited habit, and it responds; but appeal to its power of independent thought, and it is for the most part as helpless as any other machine.

. . . . . .

'Of course the animals show many

human traits; their whole emotional life . . . seems to run parallel to our own. They live in feeling, not in thought. Huxley says it is because they have no language. They have no language because their brains are not developed to the language point. But to have emotions and feelings and associations and repulsions, the sense of direction, the sense of home, the love of offspring, the fear of enemies, we do not need a language, we need only the senses.'

Theodore Roosevelt once wrote Mr. Burroughs that although he took no stock in the many claims of the nature fakers about animals teaching their young, he did think that, on rare occasions, there seemed to be a conscious effort at teaching, and he cited, as an example, a setter dog that thrashed its puppy soundly for carelessly flushing a bird. In the essay called 'Animal Com-

munication' ('Ways of Nature'), Burroughs replies thus:

'Teaching implies reflection and judgment; it implies a thought of, and solicitude for, the future. "The young will need this knowledge," says the human parent, "and so we will impart it to them now." But the animal parent has consciously no knowledge to impart, only fear or suspicion. One may affirm almost anything of trained dogs and of dogs generally. I can well believe that the setter bitch spoken of by the President, punished her pup when it flushed a bird — she had been punished herself for the same offense — but that the act was expressive of anything more than her present anger, that she was in any sense trying to train and instruct her pup, there is no proof.'

In 'What do Animals Know?' ('Ways of Nature'), he helps to clear up some

misconceptions about the lower orders of animals:

'It is almost impossible for us not to interpret the lives of the lower animals in the terms of our own experience and our own psychology. I entirely agree with Lloyd Morgan that we err when we do so, — when we attribute to them what we call sentiments, or any of the emotions that spring from our moral and æsthetic natures — the sentiments of justice, truth, beauty, altruism, goodness, duty, and the like — because these sentiments are the product of concepts and ideas to which the brute natures are strangers. But all the emotions of our animal nature — fear, anger, curiosity, local attachment, jealousy, rivalry — are undoubtedly the same in the lower orders.

'Though almost anything may be affirmed of dogs, for they are nearly half human, yet I doubt if even dogs experi-

ence the feeling of shame or guilt or revenge that we so often ascribe to them.[1] These feelings are all complex and have a deep root. When I was a youth my father had a big churn-dog that appeared one morning with a small bullet-hole in his hip. Day after day the old dog treated his wound with his tongue, after the manner of dogs, till it healed, and the incident was nearly forgotten. One day a man was going by on horseback, when the old dog rushed out, sprang at the man, and came near pulling him from the horse. It turned out that this was the person who had shot the dog, and the dog recognized him.

'This looks like revenge, and it would have been such in you or me, but in the dog it was probably simple anger at the sight of the man who had hurt him. The incident shows memory and the association of impressions, but the

[1] *See* pages 57 and 72.

complex feeling of vengeance, as we know it, is another matter.'

. . . . . .

'The stories, which seem to be well authenticated, of sheep-killing dogs that have slipped their collars in the night and indulged their passion for live mutton, and then returned and thrust their necks into their collars before their absence was discovered, do not, to my mind, prove that the dogs were trying to deceive their masters and conceal their guilt, but rather show how obedient to the chain and collar the dogs had become. They had long been subject to such control and discipline, and they returned to them again from mere force of habit.

'I do not believe even the dog to be capable of a sense of guilt. Such a sense implies a sense of duty, and this is a complex ethical sense that the lower animals do not experience. What the

dog fears, and what makes him put on his look of guilt and shame, is his master's anger. A harsh word or a severe look will make him assume the air of a culprit, whether he is one or not, and, on the other hand, a kind word and a reassuring smile will transform him into a happy beast, no matter if the blood of his victim is fresh upon him.' [1]

A dog is to be broken of a bad habit, if at all, not by an appeal to his conscience, or to his sense of duty, for he has neither, but by an appeal to his susceptibility to pain.

In 'A Pinch of Salt' ('Ways of Nature') he reminds us:

'Animals know only through their senses, and this "knowledge is restricted to things present in time and space." Reflection, or a return upon themselves in thought, of this they are

[1] *See ante*, pages 57 and 70.

not capable. Their only language consists of various cries and calls, expressions of pain, alarm, joy, love, anger. They communicate with one another, and come to share one another's mental or emotional states, through these cries and calls. A dog barks in various tones and keys, each of which expresses a different feeling in the dog. I can always tell when my dog is barking at a snake; there is something peculiar in the tone. The hunter knows when his hound has driven the fox to hole by a change in his baying.'

Every lover of dogs who has enjoyed Maeterlinck's tribute to the dog, will enjoy what Burroughs has to say about it in 'The Literary Treatment of Nature' ('Ways of Nature'):

'Maeterlinck's treatment of the dog . . . is probably the best thing on our four-footed comrade that English literature has to show. It gives one pleasure,

not because it is all true as science is true, but because it is so tender, human, and sympathetic, without being false to the essential dog nature; it does not make the dog do impossible things. It is not natural history, it is literature; it is not a record of observations upon the manners and habits of the dog, but reflections upon him and his relations to man, and upon the many problems, from the human point of view, that the dog must master in a brief time; the distinctions he must figure out, the mistakes he must avoid, the riddles of life he must read in his dumb dog way. Of course, as a matter of fact, the dog is not compelled "in less than five or six weeks to get into his mind, taking shape within it, an image and a satisfactory conception of the universe." No, nor in five or six years. Strictly speaking, he is not capable of conceptions at all, but only of sense impressions; his sure guide

is instinct — not blundering reason. The dog starts with a fund of knowledge which man acquires slowly and painfully. But all this does not trouble one in reading of Maeterlinck's dog. Our interest is awakened, and our sympathies are moved, by seeing the world presented to the dog as it presents itself to us, or by putting ourselves in the dog's place. It is not false natural history; it is a fund of true human sentiment awakened by the contemplation of the dog's life and character.

'Maeterlinck does not ascribe human powers and capacities to his dumb friend, the dog; he has no incredible tales of its sagacity and wit to relate; it is only an ordinary bull pup that he describes, but he makes us love it, and, through it, all other dogs, by his loving analysis of its trials and tribulations, and its devotion to its god, man. In

like manner, in John Muir's story of his dog Stickeen — a story to go with "Rab and his Friends" — our credulity is not once challenged. Our sympathies are deeply moved because our reason is not in the least outraged. It is true that Muir makes his dog act like a human being under the press of great danger; but the action is not the kind that involves reason; it only implies sense perception, and the instinct of self-preservation. Stickeen does as his master bids him, and he is human only in the human emotions of fear, despair, joy, that he shows.'

In another essay, 'Human Traits in the Animals' ('Leaf and Tendril') he says further of Stickeen:

'When John Muir and his dog, Stickeen, at the imminent peril of their lives at last got over that terrible crevasse in the Alaska glacier, the dog's demonstrations of joy were very touching. He

raced and bounded and cut capers and barked and felicitated himself and his master as only a dog can.'

Continuing the comments on the literary treatment of nature, he says:

'In Mr. Egerton Young's "My Dogs of the Northland" I find much that is interesting, and several vivid dog portraits, but Mr. Young humanizes his dogs to a greater extent than does either Muir or Maeterlinck. For instance, he makes his dog Jack take special delight in teasing the Indian servant girl by walking or lying upon her kitchen floor when she had just cleaned it, all in revenge for the slights the girl had put upon him; and he gives several instances of the conduct of the dog which he thus interprets. Now one can believe almost anything of dogs in the way of wit about their food, their safety, and the like, but one cannot make them so entirely human as delib-

erately to plan and execute the kind of revenge here imputed to Jack. No animal could appreciate a woman's pride in a clean kitchen floor, or see any relation between the tracks which he makes upon the floor and her state of feeling toward himself. Mr. Young's facts are doubtless right; it is his interpretation of them that is wrong.

'It is perfectly legitimate for the animal story-writer to put himself inside the animal he wishes to portray, and tell how life and the world look from that point of view; but he must always be true to the facts in the case, and to the limited intelligence for which he speaks. . . . To attribute human motives and faculties to the animals, is to caricature them; but to put us in such relation with them that we feel their kinship; that we see their lives embosomed in the same iron necessity as our own; that we see in their minds

a humbler manifestation of the same psychic power and intelligence that culminates, and is conscious of itself, in man — that, I take it, is the true humanization.'

In 'The Animal Mind' ('The Summit of the Years') we get the benefit of his keen observation and rational deductions:

'Animals never laugh, and probably never experience in any degree the emotion that makes us laugh, because their minds do not perceive incongruities. Such perception is an intellectual act that is beyond them.[1] The incongruous only strikes them as something strange, and excites their suspicions or their fears. When one day I suddenly appeared before my dog in a suit of khaki, a garb in which he had never before seen me, did it excite his mirth, as it did that of some of my neighbors?

[1] *See* page 89.

On the contrary, it alarmed him; he hesitated a moment, showing conflicting emotions, then edged away suspiciously, and when I made a hostile demonstration towards him, fled precipitately in a high state of anger and excitement. Not till I spoke to him in the old tone did he recover himself and approach me in a humiliated, apologetic way.'

. . . . . .

'Considering the gulf that separates man from the lower orders, I often wonder how, for instance, we can have such a sense of companionship with a dog. What is it in the dog that so appeals to us? It is probably his quick responsiveness to our attention. He meets us half way. He gives caress for caress. Then he is that light-hearted, irresponsible vagabond that so many of us half-consciously long to be if we could and dared. To a dog, a walk is

the best of good fortunes; he sniffs adventure at every turn, is sure something thrilling will happen around the next bend in the path. How much he gets out of it that escapes me! — the excitement of all the different odors that my sense is too dull to take in. The ground to him is written over with the scent of game of some sort, the air is full of the lure of wild adventure. How human he is at such times! he is out on a lark. In his spirit of hilarity he will chase hens, pigs, sheep, cows, which ordinarily he would give no heed to, just as boys abroad in the fields and woods will commit depredations that they would be ashamed of at home.

'When I go to my neighbor's house his dog of many strains, and a great crony of mine, becomes riotous with delight. He whines with joy, hops upon my lap, caresses me, then springs to the door, and with wagging tail and speak-

ing looks and actions says, "Come on, let's off!" I open the door and say, "Go if you want to." He leaps back upon my lap and says, "No, no, not without you." Then to the door again with his eloquent pantomime, till I finally follow him forth into the street. Then he tears up the road to the woods, saying so plainly, "Better one hour of Slabsides than a week of humdrum at home." At such times, if we chance to meet his master or his mistress on the road, he heeds them not, and is absolutely deaf to their calls.

'Well, I do not suppose the dog is in our line of descent, but his stem-form must join ours not very far back. He is our brother at not very many removes, and he has been so modified and humanized by his long intercourse with our kind, stretching no doubt through hundreds of thousands of years, that we are near to him and he is near to us.

I do not suppose, if this affectionate intercourse were to continue any number of ages or cycles longer, that the dog would ever be any more developed on his intellectual side; he can never share our thoughts any more than he does now. He has not, nor have any of the lower orders, that which Ray Lankester aptly calls educability, — that which distinguishes man from all other creatures. We can train animals to do wonderful things, but we cannot develop in them, or graft upon them, this capacity for intellectual improvement, — to grasp and wield and store up ideas. Man's effect upon trained animals is like the effect of a magnet upon a piece of steel: for the moment he imparts some of his own powers to them, and holds them up to the ideal plane, but they are not permanently intellectualized; no new power is developed in them; and they soon fall

back to their natural state. What they seem to acquire is not free intelligence that they can apply to other problems. We have not enlarged their minds, but have shaped their impulses to a new pattern. They are no wiser, but they are more apt. They do a human "stunt," but they do not think human thoughts.'

In 'The Animal and the Puzzle-Box' ('The Summit of the Years') Burroughs, inquiring into the value of laboratory investigations of the animal mind, wonders how much the indoor naturalist learns of the springs of animal behavior. 'What important additions,' he asks, 'has he made, or can he make, to our knowledge of these animals? He has learned that the dog is probably color-blind, which one might have easily inferred, since the color-sense could be of little use to the dog, or to any other quadruped. . . . But of the

dog's marvelous power of scent, as displayed by the setter and the fox-hound, he can learn little. Of his real intelligence, and of his various capacities and capabilities, he can learn little. We do not need laboratory experiments to prove to us that the dog's touchstone is his nose and not his eye; his eye is of second- or third-rate importance to him; his ear serves him more than his eye; he does not know his own master till he has got his scent, or heard his voice. For the most part he sees only objects in motion.... There is little power of discrimination in the eye of any of the canine tribe; the acuteness of their other senses make up for it.'

In 'Untaught Wisdom' ('The Summit of the Years') he says convincingly:

'Our cats and our dogs are, as it were, pulled along in our wake. They learn without instruction to do certain things which they see us do, if these

things are in a line with their natural activities, such as clawing, pawing, jumping, and seizing. They learn to open gates and doors and to pull cords, and to do many other things. I recently saw a common cur dog that would sing when told to do so; he would lift up his head and send forth a long, low, rather musical howl. This came easy to him, as howling is one of the dog's natural accomplishments. A dog loves to play at the game of hunting the ball or the stone which you throw, because this act is in line with his instincts, and he never tires of the fun. Of course a dog can be trained to do almost anything, but to enlighten his mind about the whys and the wherefores of the thing is quite another matter. You can train an animal to act, but can you train it to think? Of course your dog or your horse could not be trained to do its trick did it not possess

certain powers that may be called mental, such as power of attention, power of imitation, power of association, and the capacity to feel a stronger will. But these powers are all phases of the animal's instinctive activities, and do not presuppose judgment or reason. When we train an animal, we make, as it were, an artificial channel for its mental currents to flow in, and they flow there without conscious choice or self-direction, as water flows in the channel we make for it. How helpless they feel themselves to be, poor things!'

Of imitation in animals, he says, in 'Factors in Animal Life' ('Ways of Nature'):

'Animals of different species, closely associated, will imitate one another. . . . Dogs reared with cats have been known to acquire the habit of licking the paws and then washing the ears and face. Wolves reared with dogs learn to bark,

and who has not seen a dog draw its face as if trying to laugh as its master does?'

Regarding the dog's sense of humor, he says in 'Nature in Little' ('Field and Study'):

'Most animals certainly have a keen sense of play, but it is very doubtful if even so humanized an animal as the dog has any sense of humor. The grotesque is pretty sure to frighten him instead of amusing him. The sense of humor implies powers of ideation, which the lower animals do not possess.' [1]

He helps one to some straight seeing and clear thinking in the subjoined passages from 'A Beaver's Reason' ('Ways of Nature'):

'In many ways an animal is like a child. What comes first in a child is simple perception and memory and association of memories, and these make

[1] *See* page 80.

up the main sum of an animal's intelligence. The child goes on developing till it reaches the power of reflection and generalization — a stage of mentality that the animal never attains to.

'All animal life is specialized; each animal is an expert in its own line of work — the work of its tribe. Beavers do the work of beavers, they cut down trees and build dams, and all beavers do it alike and with the same degree of untaught skill. This is instinct, or unthinking nature.

'On a hot day a dog will often dig down to fresh earth to get cooler soil to lie on. Or he will go and lie in the creek. All dogs do these things. Now if a dog were seen to carry stones and sods to dam up the creek to make a deeper pool to lie in, then he would, in a measure, be imitating the beavers, and this, in the dog, could fairly be called an act of reason, because it is not

a necessity of the conditions of his life; it would be of the nature of an afterthought.'

. . . . . .

'Wild animals may be trained, but not educated. We multiply impressions upon them without adding to their store of knowledge, because they cannot evolve general ideas from their sense impressions. Here we reach their limitations. . . . You may train your dog so that he will bound around you when he greets you without putting his feet upon you. But do you suppose the fond creature ever comes to know why you do not want his feet upon you? If he does, then he takes the step in general knowledge to which I have referred.

'In denying thought or free intelligence in animals, an exception should undoubtedly be made in favor of the dog. I have said elsewhere that the

dog is almost a human product; he has been the companion of man so long, and has been so loved by him, that he has come to partake, in a measure at least, of his master's nature. If the dog does not at times think, reflect, he does something so like it that I can find no other name for it. Take so simple an incident as this, which is of common occurrence: A collie dog is going along the street in advance of his master's team. He comes to a point where the road forks; he takes, say, the road to the left and trots along it a few rods, and then, half turning, suddenly pauses and looks back at the team. Has he not been struck by the thought, "I do not know which way my master is going: I will wait and see"? If the dog in such cases does not reflect, what does he do? Can we find any other word for his act? To ask a question by word or deed involves some sort of mental process,

however rudimentary. Is there any other animal that would act as the collie did under like circumstances?'

Commenting on our blind, unreasoning anger being excited by whatever opposes or baffles us, Burroughs points out that when we yield to this anger, we are acting, not like reasonable beings, but like the unreasoning animals. Yet he says he does not think that many animals show their kinship to us by exhibiting this trait. He thinks perhaps the dog bites the stone which you roll to him, or the stick you throw, from the same instinct that his primitive ancestors felt to bite and kill the game run down in the chase. But he asks: 'Or is the dog trying to punish the stick or stone because it will not roll or fly for him? The dog is often quick to resent a kick, be it from man or beast, but I have never known him to show anger at the door that slammed to and hit

him. Probably if the door held him by his tail or his limb, it would quickly receive the imprint of his teeth.' 'Human Traits in the Animals' ('Leaf and Tendril').

From the same essay come the next five paragraphs:

'Self-confidence, self-control, an authoritative manner, count for just as much in our dealing with the animals as with men. How a bold, unhesitating manner will carry you through a pack of threatening dogs, while timidity or parleying endangers your calves! Act as though you were the rightful master of the place and had come to give orders, and the most threatening watch-dog gives way. Flee from a mad bull, a cross dog, a butting sheep, and your danger is vastly increased.'

. . . . . .

'The dog undoubtedly exhibits more human traits than any other animal,

and this by reason of his long association with man. There are few of our ordinary emotions that the dog does not share, as joy, fun, love of adventure, jealousy, suspicion, comradeship, helpfulness, guilt, covetousness, and the like — or feelings analogous to these — the dog-version of them. I am not sure but that the dog is capable of contempt. The behavior at times of a large dog toward a small, the slights he will put upon him, is hardly capable of any other interpretation. The forbearance, too, which a large dog usually shows toward a touchy little whiffet, never resenting its impudent attacks, is very human. "A barking dog never bites" is an old saying founded upon human nature as well as upon dog nature. The noisy blusterer is rarely dangerous, whether man or dog. I do not agree with Stevenson that the dog is a snob. The key to a dog's heart is

kindness. He will always meet you half way and more. I have been asked why the farm dog usually shows such hostility to tramps and all disreputable-looking persons. It is not their looks that disturb the dog, but their smell, a strange, unknown odor. This at once puts him on his guard and excites his enmity. There is little speculation in the eye of a dog, but his nose is keen and analytical.

'The dog through his long intercourse with man has become charged with our human quality, as steel is charged by a magnet. Yet I am told that a tame wolf, or a tame fox, fawns and wags his tail and tries to lick his master's face, the same as a dog. At any rate, the dog does many things that we can name only in terms applicable to ourselves. My dog coaxes me to go for a walk, he coaxes to get upon my lap, he coaxes for the food I

am eating. When I upbraid him, he looks repentant and humiliated. When I whip him, he cries. When I praise him, he bounds; when I greet him in the morning, he whines with joy. It is not the words that count with him, it is the tone of the voice.

'When I start out for a walk, he waits and dances about till he sees which way I am going. It seems as if he must at such times have some sort of mental process similar to my own under like circumstances. Or, is his whole behavior automatic — his attitude of eagerness, expectancy, inquiry, and all? as automatic as the wagging of his tail when he is pleased, or as his bristling up when he is angry? It evinces some sort of mental action, but the nature of it is hard to divine. When he sits looking vaguely out upon the landscape, or rests his chin upon his paws and gazes into the fire, I wish I

knew if there were anything like currents of thought, or reminiscence, or anticipations passing through his mind. When I speak sternly to him and he cowers down, or throws himself upon his back, and puts up his paws pleadingly, I wish I knew just the state of his mind then. One day my dog deserted me while I was hunting, and when I returned, and before I had spoken a word to him, he came creeping up to me in the most abject way, threw himself over, and put up his pleading paws, as if begging forgiveness. Was he? We should call it that in a person. Yet I remember that I upbraided him when he first showed the inclination to desert me, and that fact may account for his subsequent behavior.

'When you speak to your dog in a certain way, why does he come up to you and put out his front legs and stretch, and then stretch his hind legs,

and may be open his mouth and gape? Is it an affectation, or a little embarrassment because he does not know what you are saying? All dogs do it. The human traits of the dog are very obvious. One time I drove many miles through the country with my small mongrel black and tan dog, Lark, with me, often on the seat by my side. When he was in the wagon, and other dogs came out and barked at us, Lark was very brave and answered back defiantly and threateningly; but when he was upon the ground and other dogs came out, Lark was as meek and nonresisting as a Quaker. Then let me take him up out of harm's way, and see how his tone would change, and what a setting out he would give those dogs!'

From 'The Dog' ('Field and Study'):

'The most wonderful thing about the dog is not his intelligence, but his capacity for loving. We can call it by no

other name. The more you love your dog, the more your dog loves you. You can win your neighbor's dog any time by loving him more than your neighbor does. He will follow you to the ends of the earth if you love him enough. He may become so attached to you that he fairly divines your thoughts, not through his own power of thought, but through his intense sympathy and the free-masonry of love.

'He is the ideal companion because he gives you a sense of companionship without disturbing your sense of solitude. Your mind is alone, but your heart has company. He is below your horizon, but something comes up from his life that mingles with your own. This friend walks with you, or sits with you, and yet he does not come between you and your book, or between you and the holiday spirit you went out to woo. He is the visible embodiment of the

holiday spirit; he shows you how to leave dull care behind; he goes forth with you in the spirit of eternal youth, sure that something beautiful, or curious, or adventurous will happen at any turn of the road. He finds no places dull, he is alert with expectancy every moment.

'In him you have good fellowship always on tap, as it were. Say the word and he bounds to your side, or leads the way to the woods.

'My dog enjoys a walk more than I do; his nature-study is quite as real as mine is, though of a totally different kind; the sense of smell that plays such a part in his excursions, plays little or none in mine; and the eye and the mind which contribute so much to my enjoyment, are almost a blank with him. He enjoys the open fire, too, and a warm, soft bed, and a good dinner. All his purely animal enjoyments are as keen

or keener than mine, but has he any other?

'How different his interest in cats is from mine, and in dogs, and in men! He is not interested in the landscape as a whole; I doubt very much if he sees it at all; but he is interested in what the landscape holds for him — the woodchuck hole, or the squirrel's den, or the fox's trail. His life is entirely the life of the senses, and on this ground we meet and are boon companions.

'If he has any mind-life, any ideas, if he ever looks back over the past, or forward into the future, I see no evidence of it. When there is nothing doing, he sleeps; apparently he could sleep all the time, if there were nothing better going on.'

In all which has gone before, and in the concluding passage, quoted from 'The Literary Treatment of Nature' ('Ways of Nature'), I trust the lover of

dogs is persuaded, with Burroughs, that the truth about animal life is far more interesting than any fiction about it. In denying human intelligence to his dog friends, Burroughs loved not dogs the less, but truth, the more.

'I would not be unjust or unsympathetic toward the current tendency to exalt the lower animals to the human sphere. I would only help my reader to see things as they are, and stimulate him to love the animals as animals, and not as men. Nothing is gained by self-deception. The best discipline of life is that which prepares us to face the facts, no matter what they are. Such sweet companionship as one may have with a dog, simply because he is a dog, and does not invade your own exclusive sphere! He is, in a way, like your youth come back to you, and taking form — all instinct and joy and adventure. You can ignore him, and he is not of-

fended; you can reprove him, and he still loves you; you can hail him and he bounds with joy; you can camp and tramp and ride with him, and his interest and curiosity and adventurous spirit give to the days and the nights the true holiday atmosphere. With him you are alone and not alone; you have both companionship and solitude. Who would have him more human or less canine? He divines your thought through his love, and feels your will in the glance of your eye. He is not a rational being, yet he is a very susceptible one, and touches us at so many points that we come to look upon him with a fraternal regard.'

THE END

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